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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

Letter dated 9 August 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to refer the agreement reached on 14 July 1999 to observe annually the Day of Lebanese Prisoners in Israeli Prisons.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia affirms its support for the Lebanese people and for its call for the restitution of all its legal rights through the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and requests the international community and all governments throughout the world to work for the release of all Lebanese and Arab detainees unjustly held in the Khiam prison centre and in Israeli prisons.

Israel is holding 170 Lebanese hostages in its prisons, 128 of them in the Khiam prison centre and 42 in prisons inside Israel (Ashkelon, Ayloun and Nafha), as well as 10 Palestinian residents of Lebanon. Israel inflicts the worst forms of physical and mental torture on these detainees in closed prisons, isolated from the outside world, and does not allow humanitarian and human rights organizations to have contact with these prisoners, the majority of whom are being detained administratively and without trial. When they are released, a large number will emerge with permanent ailments and chronic diseases that are difficult to treat. In addition to Israeli legislation on the holding and torture of hostages, the Israel Supreme Court stated on 12 November 1997 that the Lebanese detainees were hostages and a bargaining card, something which is a blatant and unprecedented violation of international law.

The Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia calls on the international community, and anticipates your own efforts in that regard, Mr. Secretary-General:

To secure the immediate release of the sick, the young and the elderly;

To secure the release of all of those who have served their sentences at Ayloun;

To put an end to the practice of torture and harsh treatment which demeans the human dignity of the Lebanese detainees;

To send an international commission of inquiry to the Khiam prison centre and to bring to trial those Israeli officers who have perpetrated acts of torture;

To ensure that all the prisoners are able to meet their families, lawyers, the International Committee of the Red Cross and humanitarian organizations;

To condemn the ruling of the Israel Supreme Court by which it acknowledged the Lebanese prisoners as hostages, and to request that that ruling be repealed as a blatant violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

To have the mock trials of the prisoners declared null and void because they violate international law.

You are well aware, Mr. Secretary-General, as is the international community, of the continuation of these tyrannical and illegal practices against Lebanon. The Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia hopes that you will spare no effort to have them stopped, to assist the prisoners and to set matters right.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 40 and 155, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Fauzi Bin Abdul Majeed SHOBOKSHI
Permanent Representative